Setup□

First, give each player one Stance card and one of each Action card. Next, randomly determine a first player, and give them the Sword card, which is put to one side near that player. Players place their Stance cards horizontal□ between themselves, with the closest long edges touching. The first player moves the pair of Stance cards to the left or right edge of the table. This defines the "timeline" (see Terms). Each player's 6 Action cards are their hand.

Terms to remember□

Round: The recurring loop of play in which Actions are placed and resolved, ending with resolution of 1 - 3 Actions.
Beat: A beat is one section of an Action card. Upright□ cards have 2 beats, while horizontal□ cards have 3.

◻More Terms◻

Timeline/age: The imaginary line along which Actions are placed is the timeline. Actions or beats closer to the Stance cards are "older".

Action States: The text on the edge closest to the player shows the active state.

Stance States: Stances are inactive when horizontal◻, and activate when turned upright◻.

Orientation◻◻: Cards may be upright◻ or horizontal◻ for various reasons.

Attack/Defense: Any card with the word "Strike" somewhere on it is an Attack. All others are Defense cards.

Alignment: Actions are aligned beat by beat to opposing Actions on the timeline.

◻Upkeep◻

Between rounds, any player with less than 4 cards in hand returns the oldest card in their timeline to their hand.

【Round sequence】

If either player's next card starts earlier in the timeline, they play first. Otherwise, the player with the Sword plays first, then passes the Sword to the opponent.
If playing an Action which aligns its last beat to an already-revealed Action, it is played face-up. If playing a face-up Action reduces the player's hand below 4, they return the oldest card in their timeline to their hand. Any cards which can resolve now, do so. All other Actions are played face-down.
Once each player has a face-down card on the table, they are revealed, and resolved as described below.

【Resolution】

Beats resolve in timeline order, on the turn they're aligned. Defense cards with high/low set that stance upright⬜ on the first beat.

Attacks succeed on their last beat, unless blocked or evaded, and resolve before Defense cards reset stance. If two identical attacks resolve simultaneously, both are blocked. An attack with any beat matching a Guard for the same stance is blocked. Transitions and Lunges count as their active stance, but swap stance if unblocked. Sidesteps evade Strikes and in-stance Lunges. Backsteps evade Strikes and Slashes. Slashes with the wrong Stance active flip their Stance card. Non-Lunge Attacks are evaded if their Stance is inactive. Lunges without active stance can't be evaded, but are blocked by any Guard. If an Attack succeeds, the target's Stance is deactivated if it wasn't already. If the target's Stance was already inactive, that player loses.